

### Remarks

Claims 1, 11, 12 and 15 through 31, as amended, are now pending.

Claims 2 through 10, 13, and 14 have been cancelled.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 11 through 13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, claim 1 has been significantly amended to incorporate various of the limitations of claim 11.

Further, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the substance of claim 13 (an originally filed claim), namely, that the functionalized elastomer is an “epoxidized elastomer selected from epoxidized natural cis 1,4-polyisoprene elastomer, epoxidized-polybutadiene or styrene-butadiene-glycidal methacrylate terpolymer”.

Product claims 15 through 20, as amended, and new claims 21 through 31, are maintained and presented as ultimately depending from substantially amended claim 1.

### The Rejection

The following patent publications have been relied upon to reject various of the Applicants' claims:

<u>U.S. Patents</u>	
5,883,173	Elspass
5,576,372	Kresge

<u>Foreign Patent Publication</u>	
EP 1,029,823	Usuki

The Applicants' claims 1 through 6, 15, and 18 through 20, have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Elspass.

In view of the aforesaid significant amendment of claim 1, it is believed that this rejection is rendered moot.

The Applicants' claims 7, 8, 14, 16 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Elspass in view of Kresge.

In view of the aforesaid significant amendment of claim 1, it is believed that this rejection is rendered moot.

The Applicants' claims 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Elspass in view of Usuki.

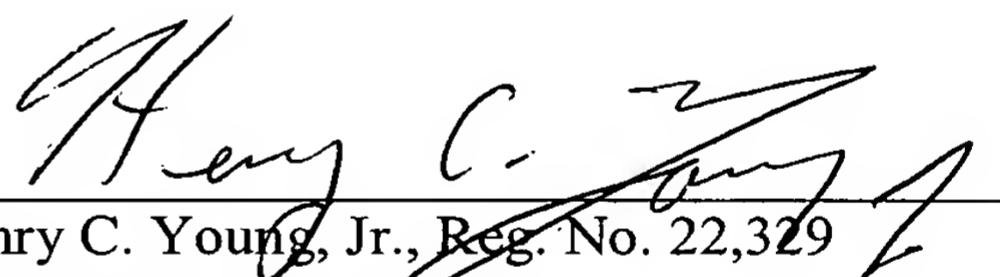
In view of the cancellation of claims 9 and 10, it is believed that this rejection is rendered moot.

It is believed that the Examiner's objection to claims 12 and 13 based on improper dependent form has been remedied by amendments made to claim 1.

### Conclusion

In view of significant amendments made to the Applicants' claims, particularly claim 1, it is believed that the Applicants' claims are now in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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